CERTAIN SELECT CASES RESOLVED.

Specially, tending to the right ordering of the heart, that we may comfortably Walk with God in our generall and particular CALLINGS.

BY Shepard
THOMAS SHEPHARD,
Sometimes of *Emanuel College* in *Cambridge*, Now Preacher of Gods Word in *New-England*.

LONDON,
Printed for *John Rothwel*. 1655.

CERTAIN

SELECT CASES

RESOLVED,

Specially, tending to the
righteering of the heart,

that we may comfortably
Walk with God in our ge-
neral and particular
CALLINGS.

BY

THOMAS SHEPHARD,

Sometimes of Emanuel College in
Cambridge, Now Preacher of
Gods Word in New-England.

LONDON,
Printed for John Rothwel. 1657.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER:

THis holy Letter of that ready Scribe of Christs Kingdom, is so full of Grace and Truth, that it needs no other Epistle commendatory than it self. Mr. Shepherd of New-England.

Yet seeing the Lot is unexpectedly fallen upon my pen, to give it a Superscription that it may pass current from hand to hand; I do heartily in the first place, dedicate it to thee, thou bleeding, troubled-spirit, as a choice cordiall friend, an Interpretor, one of a thousand, that doth not onely speak thy heart, but by the comforter (whom Christ hath promised to send) to thy heart.

It may be this paper present is sent on Ambassie from Heaven, on purpose, to set thy house in order, to untie thy bosom knots, to bind the strong man, and cast him out of thy doores, that thy heart may be once again set at liberty, to serve the Lord thy God in thy generall and particular Calling, whose service is thy freedom. What is here sent by this Ambassador of Christ, (who is now the voice of one crying in the wilderness) to a wearie and heavy laden soul, in this Island, I had rather it should appear to thy judgement in the serious reading, and to thy conscience in the home application thereof, than from my opinion of it: Therefore I shall only adde (as the

the Contents of this letter) certain select Cases, proposed and resolved *in the severall paragraphs thereof, as they lie in order in the pages following*, viz.

Page 3.

Trouble of mind in civill affairs by the secret injection of religious thoughts.

Page 4.

From what Spirit such suggestions do arise.

Page 8.

How to entertain them when they crowd in.

Page 12.

Concerning the not being humbled for sinfull distractions that hinder and interrupt the spirituall performance of holy duties.

Page 16.

How a Christian may be said to be under the Covenant of works.

Page 18.

How to conceive aright of that Mystery of Mysteries, the blessed Persons in the Trinity.

Page. 22.

The souls aptness to go to God immediatly in holy duties, without taking Christ Jesus by the hand.

Page 26.

How to apply absolute promises to thy self, though they are made indefinitely without condition.

Page 38.

A notable discovery of a secret unwillingness in the soul, to seek God in the strictest solemn services, before it entreth into them: Wearines of them, while they last; and a gladness, when they are ended.

Page. 42.

A sound confutation of that Hereticall Arminian Tenet, *viz*. That the strength of Grace is to be got rather by Argumentation, than inward Communication and influence, arising from union with Christ.

Page 44.

The experiences of this tried servant of Christ, (who is the Pen-man hereof) how he was cured of Atheisticall thoughts: whether they did wear out, or whether by the dint of Argument they were rationally overthrown.

Lastly, whether those changes, which a child of God hath sometimes, and those movings of the Spirit are caused by a naturall temper, or Gods Spirit.

All which select Cases, (and many more, that collaterally issue from their sides) are judiciously resolved with much perspicuity and brevity in these few sheets, by the onely Judge of all Controversies, the two edged sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

Thus humbly beseeching thee, to read over this Epistle of Christ to thee, with the same Spirit of love, and of a sound mind, which indited every line in it;

I do desire to leave thee at the Throne of Grace, in the armes of Christ, with the Father of all Comfort; that thou maiest receive the Peace of God which passeth all understanding; and be crowned with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;

I subscribe my self,

Friend,

Thine in any Spirituall furtherance of thy Faith,

WILLIAM ADDERLEY.

Dated from *Charter-house* in *London*, Feb. 1. 1647.

X IMPRI-

IMPRIMATUR

Ioseph Caryl.

This Reverend Author hath other Practicall peeces:

Viz.

The { Treatise of the Sabbath. / Sincere Convert. / Sound Beleever. }

Dear Sir,

I Dare not multiply many words in acknowledging and professing my own unfitness and insufficiency to yeeld your loving and most welcom Letter, that satisfaction which both your Self desire, and it deserves: Neither yet will I be so unfaithfull to you (seeing your expectation puts me to reply) neither ought I (I think) be so unserviceable to Iesus Christ, who in you, and by you, beckens to me to take this call to write to you, and not to neglect so fair a season; seeing especially it may be possible my dying Letter to you, before I depart from hence, and return to him, as not knowing but our last disasters and Sea-straits (of which I wrote to you) may be but preparations for the execution of this next approaching voiage. Yet our eyes are to the hils, and our desires are your prayers; and at this time my endeavour shall be in respect of your self, to break open that light to you, and to prepare it to you, with that brevity I may, and with what plainenesse I am able; beseeching the God and Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, who must be when all failes, the wonderfull Counsellor, to give you the Spirit of revelation, and that after you have suffered a while by these outward temptations, doubts, fears, desertions, distractions, which like Letter mutinies, hee would make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you. And this I verily think will be the unexpected, yet happy, joyfull, and most glorious end of them: For since I have observed and

the lamentable ruines of the soul, and seeming graces of many men, by being rockt asleep in a quiet, still, calm, easie performance of duties; without such awaking temptations and tumults within, which it self complains of. I say, since I have observed what a deal of mud is in the bottom of such standing Pools, and what a deal of filth is in such Moats, which are inwardly at ease, and not emptied from vessell to vessell, next unto the donation of the Lord Iesus to a man, I have accounted tumultuous heart-storms and uproars, together with the fruitfull strange effects of them, the second mercy. For I never saw that man kept from secret putrefaction and corruption, that was not usually salted with such temptations (especially in a Christians first Apprentiship) which usually preserve him entire till death. And therefore (Dear Sir) faint not, for Jesus Christ will raise a world of blessings out of your present Chaos and confusions. But I make haft to answer. Before your reply to my first Letter, your complaints are many.

Your first trouble is, concerning your disturbances in civill affairs, by the secret injection of Religious thoughts; so that you know not how to follow the one, without hazard of grieving the Spirit, and breaking your peace, in not maintaining and nourishing the same time the other: and hence being drawn to go two wayes at the same time (which you cannot well do) your heart is disquieted, and your peace much interrupted.

This of yours, puts me in mind of the complaint of an honest, yet plain man, to an able Minister once, who in bewailing his condition to him, among other miseries, that was not the least: (*viz.*) that he was exceedingly troubled with good thoughts, so that he could not follow his place, unless very oft he did stand still and pray, for fear of grieving the Spirit (as he thought) and losing his season of being heard in Heaven: (for said Conscience oft unto him) how dost thou know but this may be thy accepted time, and if thou dost not take it, it may be thou shalt never have it again? I have forgot the Ministers answer, but I am sure in these complaints you go not alone: I have lately known one very able, wise, and godly, put upon the Rack in these kind of thoughts by him, that envying Gods people peace, knowes how to change himself into an Angell of light. For it being his

usual

usuall course in the time of his health, to make a diary of his hourly life, and finding much benefit by it, he was in Conscience prest by the power and delusion of Satan, to make and take the same daily survay of his life in the time of his sickness, by means of which he spent his enfeebled spirits, cast on fuell to fire his sickness, and had not a friend of his convinced him of his erronious conscience, misleading him at that time, he had murdered his body, out of conscience to save his soul, and to preserve his grace; and do you think these were the motions of Gods Spirit, which like those Locusts, *Rev.* 9. 9, 10. had faces like men, but had tailes like Scorpions, and stings in their tailes?

Your thoughts I know, are not likely to produce the same effects; although you have the same efficient: and because you say your peace is hereby disturbed by ignorance, as not knowing what to do in the midst of these Civill actions and these religious thoughts, I conceive that two things are to be sadly considered of, for the cure of them.

Two things to be considered about motions.

First how to know when such religious pious thoughts come from Gods Spirit, and when from the devill transforming himself into an Angell of light, or from a well-metled stirring conscience, yet blind. For when you know they come from Gods Spirit, you are bound to nourish them; but when not, you are bound not to embrace nor comply with them. Secondly, learn how your soul is to behave and carry it self in Civill employments: For when you see how you doe, and may honour God in following them, your spirit will not be so unquiet, if at any time you imbrace not the suggestions of the other.

1. For the first briefly, all good motions and thoughts are not the Spirits motions, as may thus appear.

How to try the motions of Gods Spirit.

There be three things chiefly by which we may discern the motions, suggestions, and thoughts which come from Gods Spirit: all which concurring together in a good action, or thought, or word, (not one alone) will make discovery whether they are from Gods Spirit or not.

1. If it be suggested for Gods ends, its from Gods Spirit to act so high as for a supernaturall end must rise from a supernaturall principle, which only is Gods Spirit. Pharasaicall actions were for a double

selfish end, and hence, not from Gods Spirit, but nature, and their own spirit.

1. To be seen of men.

2. If they did any of them abhor this, yet it was to purchase and gender in their own minds an opinion of holinesse before God; and hence Christ gives them this Item, in giving Almes, that they should not let the right hand know what their left hand doth: for many men will do good acts, lest they should by the neglect of them, think them hypocrites, and so be troubled for them; Christ would have us not to take notice of what we do for such an end.

8. If they be animated and quickned from Gods command; for the higher measure of holinesse for glorious ends, without a warrant from the Word, is the more sordid superstition: Christ healed the Leper, when he charged him with anger to tell no man, he (no question for a good end) published the miracle the more; this was a good motion; but it was sinfull in him, being crosse to Christs command: when Christ would have washed *Peters* feet, he had many thoughts that came into his head, concerning his own vilenesse, and Christs glory; and had a good end and meaning in his answers; yet his humility crossing Christs command, the Lord professeth against it, and him for it, that he had no part in him, if he should goe on in it.

3. Gods Spirit sets a man on work in due season; for let the duty be commanded and rightly directed, yet if it be not done in season, it is not from Gods Spirit: hence Psal. 1. *the righteous bring forth fruit in its season*: and hence *Solomon* speaks of *words spoken in season, are as apples of Gold*: and hence we read in Ecclesiastes of *a time, and season for every thing under the Sunne*: and therefore when there is a season of Gods appointing for civill things or busnesse, it is not season now to be molested or perplexed in it, by the injection and evocation of those thoughts which we think to proceed from the Spirit of God. I know indeed, that the Spirit of God doth enable a man to do what ever good he doth; but as Grace makes Nature sometimes to serve, so sinfull Nature brings Grace into captivity, (which *Paul* complains of, *Rom.* 7.) and makes Grace to serve it. To exhort and reprove another for sinne, is from Gods Spirit that it is done, but

to reprove at an unseasonable time, its from sinfull corruption, abusing Gods grace, and making *Sampson* to grind. Its from the excellency of a knife to cut well, but to cut my finger with it when I should be cutting of my meat with it, ariseth not from the end of the knife, nor from the intention of him that made it: so to think of good things, it is from the Spirit, I grant, but to think of them in such a season that God sets you awork to mind and follow other occasions, its from the enemy of Gods Spirit, and your own peace; for as it is a sinne to nourish worldly thoughts when God sets you awork in spirituall heavenly imployments, so it is (in some respects) as great a sin to suffer your self to be distracted by spirituall thoughts, when God sets you on work in Civill (yet lawfull) imployments: such thoughts (I conceive) are but the leven of Monkish holinesse, if they divert you from your lawfull affairs, when the Lord calls you to follow them. For the Lord never calls you to two divers imployments at the same time, unless you make the one to be a means to further the good of the other; which such pious thoughts in some civill imployments doe; it being no peece of Christian wisdom or honesty to turn round in worldly imployments so long till by giddiness we fall down, but by secret steps ever and anon to look up to heaven, and to behold the face of God, to whom only therin we are to approve our selves. But yet it seems your thoughts are so far from being subservient the one to the other, that you are distracted and molested, and your peace interrupted, and your Christian course made troublesom, and an heavy burthen, which surely can not be by the yoke of Jesus Christ; therefore you must first bring your troubles in this particular to this issue, either you may follow your Civill affaires, and nourish these thoughts as helps to maintain your peace and make you heavenly-minded in them, (and if they serve sufficiently to such an end, why are you troubled with them?) or else you cannot follow God comfortably in civill actions, unlesse you banish from you thoughts which do so miserably distract you, and then why do you fear you shall grieve iGods Spirit, if at the same time you do not give entertainment to them? the unseasonableness of which, speaks plainly they came not from the Spirits suggestions, besides their hindrance of comfortably walking with God, which the imployments themselves can never hinder.

But you will say, when is the season of nourishing such thoughts?

I Answer, Entertain those thoughts as (it may be) you have done friends, who came to you at that time you have businesse with strangers, (whom you love not so well as your friends,) you have desired them to stay a while, untill you have done with the other, and then you have returned to your friends, and when the other hath been shut out of the doors, the other hath had the welcom, and hath lodged with you all night, and thus you have grieved neither, but pleased both. It is so in this case, Worldly employments are our strangers, yet they must be spoke with, Religious thoughts and practices are our friends, these come into us while God calls us to parley with the other, you cannot speak with both at one time, in one place, without much perplexity: take therefore this course, make much of the good thoughts, but parley not with them till your businesse is done with strangers; and towards evening, which is your season, set some time apart every day for meditation, and then make them welcome; then consider and ponder well what was suggested to you in the day time, and fit every good thought to the bran, for then is your season, and after that let them sip and lodg with you all night, and keep the house with you every day. And surely, when the Lord Jesus shall see what a friend you shall make of his Spirit, and how wisely you walk therein, you shall not need to fear any grieving of it, or unseasonable times: nay (I say) you will most fearfully grieve his Spirit, if you parley with the conceived suggestions of it at unseasonable times. *What thou dost, do it with all thine heart*, saith *Solomon*. Eccle. 9.

Therefore when you are to pray, confer, or meditate, do it with all your mind, & all your thoughts, and all your strength. So when God calls you to worldly employments, do them with all your mind and might, and when the season of meditation comes, take it, which glorious Ordinance of God, although many Christians use it occasionally, & against some good time, or when they have leisure meeting with them, yet to set some time apart for it in a solemn manner every day, & that in conscience, as we do for prayer generally, where is the man to be found that does thus? Those men that thus neglect their season of musing

and

and entring into parley with Gods Spirit dayly, may be wel said to grieve the Spirit, *through the neglect of which Ordinance, Gods Spirit is as much grieved by professors in England, as by any course I know.* The Lord awaken us. But I have run too farre already in this first part of my answer.

For the second means, *viz.* how the soul is to carry it self in Civil employments, that so you may not think you do for better, when you listen to good thoughts as you mention. 2. Means.

I say two things, 1. Learn to follow them out of an awfull respect to the eye, presence, and command of Jesus Christ; and to do what you do in Civill businesses, as the work of Christ; When you are riding, or making up breaches between man and man, then think, I am now about the Work of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, seeing your self thus working in worldly employments for him, you may easily apprehend that for that time God calls you to them, and you attend upon the Work of Jesus Christ it them, that you honour God as much, nay more, by the meanest servile worldly act, than if you should have spent all that time in meditation, prayer, or any other spirituall employment, to which you had no call at that time: It is noted therefore by some, of *Peters* wives mother, that when Christ had healed her of her Fevor, she sate not down at Table with Christ in communion with him, which (no question) was sweet, but ministred at the Table, and ran too and fro, and so served him, and acted for him, wherein she shewed more love, and gave him more honour, *viz.* in that mean service, and in acting for him, than in having communion with him: now if the Lord would out of his abundant goodnesse, set the soul in such an acting frame for him, and if it could do its worldly employments, as the Work of Christ, and see how greatly it honours Christ in attending on him, Oh what peace should a Christian enjoy, notwithstanding all his distractions every day! And how easily would such devour thoughts you speak of, be repell'd, like darkness before the light for the noblenesse of those good thoughts you speak of presencing themselves against the mean and base out-sides of Civill affaires, makes you ready to honour the one, when you are call'd to serve the other: but now, by seeing, you do the Work of Christ Jesus in these, you shall hereby see a glory in the meanest service

service you perform in Civill affaires, and this will make you cleave unto them. But I have said too much about repelling of good thoughts, in these times, wherein men have so few, though (it may be) little enough to satisfie you.

Quest. 2. Your second trouble is this, (*viz.*) that your heart is kept from being humbled for sinfull distractions, that hinder and interrupt the spirituall performance of holy duties, and that for two reasons: First, Because they be involuntary and accidentall. Secondly, Because they cannot break the Covenant between God and your soul, being but infirmities.

Answ. For the latter clause concerning breach of Covenant, together with the other, 1. I say, not only infirmities do not, but the greatest sins cannot make a breach of Covenant between God and the soul that is once really (not rationally) wrapt up in the Covenant of grace. Indeed grosse scandalous sins, nay infirmities, when they are given way to, and not resisted, may keep the soul from the fruition for a time of Gods Covenant, but never from the eternal *jus* and right unto it; for as the habit of Faith or Grace gives a man a constant right to the promise and Covenant (which seed ever remains, which habit ever lasts, *1 Jer.* 3. 9.) so the act of Faith or Grace gives a man fruition of the Covenant and the benefit of the promise, and hence by the acting and venting of some sins wherein there is included the neglect of the exercise of grace, He that is really in covenant with God, may be deprived of the fruition of it; yet seeing the seed of God, and the habit of grace ever remains, he cannot by any sin break his covenant, for the covenant of grace is absolute, wherein the Lord doth not only promise the good, but to begin and perfect and fulfill the condition absolutely, without respect of sin, *ex parte creaturæ*: Indeed if Gods covenant of Grace did (as that of Works) depend upon man to fulfil the condition, having sufficient grace to fulfill it, then grosse sin might well break the Covenant: but seeing God hath undertaken to fulfill the Covenent absolutely, notwithstanding all the evils and sins of the soule, no sin can possibly break that knot and Covenant which so firm and resolute love hath once knit. And therefore, if this be a good argument, Infirmities cannot break Covenant: What cause have I to be humbled for them? so as to say,

It

It is thy mercy Lord that I am not consumed for them (as you write) you may upon the same ground say so, If the Lord should desert you, or you forsake the Lord, and so fall into the foulest sin, which I suppose corrupt conscience dares not be so bold as to think or allow of.

2. Secondly, I say least sins or infirmities do break the first Covenant of Works: and hence you do not only deserve, but are under the sentence of death, and curse of God, immediately after the least hairs-breadth swarving from the Law by the smallest sin, and most involuntary accidentall infirmity; According to the Tenor of the Law, the soul that sinneth shall die; and *cursed is he that continueth not in all things of the Law*, Gal. 3. 10. The least sin being (*ex parte objecti*) in respect of God against whom it is committed, as horrible and as great as the greatest. For it being an infinite wrong being the dishonour of an infinite Majesty, there can be no greater wrong than an infinite one, unlesse you can imagine a greater thing than that which is infinite; and therefore in this respect, there is as much venome and mischief done against God in the least, as in the greatest sin: And therefore it, and whosoever commits it, deserves death for it, as if they had committed the foulest sin in the world: and therefore after the least and smallest infirmities, you may from hence see what cause you have freely to be humbled, and to confess for them how worthy you are to be destroyed; yea, even to look upon your self as lying under the sentence of the Law and death, immediately after the commission of them, and so to mourn bitterly for them.

Object. But you will say, a Christian that is under the Covenant of grace, is not within the Covenant of works, that Bond is cancelled, the last Will must stand: and therefore he being out of that Covenant, no sins of his can be said to break the Covenant, for no man can be said to break that Law under which he is not, and which he is not bound to keep.

Answ. In answer, Every Beleever hath a double being or standing, and so there may be put upon him a double respect.

First, he may be considered as united to, and having a spirituall being on Christ; and so it is true, he is under grace, and the Covenant of Grace, and not under the Law, not the Covenant of works; and hence not being under the

the Law, nor bound to keep it as a Covenant of life (though it be a rule of life) no sin can condemn him, there being no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, *Rom.* 8. 1. As Christ is above condemnation, and law, and death, and curse, so is he. And this truly understood, is the foundation of a Christians joy and peace, and glory every day; yet so, as though sin doth not condemn him, yet he hath good reason to say, it is mercy, and meer mercy, Lord, that I am not consumed, that I am not condemned. For sin is the same; nay grace and Gods love aggravates sin; for to sin against the Law deserves death without recovery, but to sin when grace hath received me, and loved me; when the blood of Christ hath been shed abundantly to deliver me from sin; Oh this makes the most secret silent sin a crying one! So that if you do consider this well, you may see what little cause there is to have your heart rising against the deepest humiliation for the least sin, though you be in Christ, and under grace: For as *Daniel* when he was put into the Lions den, had not he cause to wonder that he was not torn in pieces by them? and why? because it was not from any defect on their parts to tear him in pieces, but from the omnipotent power, and mercy, and grace of his God, that muzzell'd their mouths: so though no Lion can tear, though no sins can hurt or condemn a Christian, as he is considered in Christ; yet, hath not he cause to confesse and wonder, and say, Lord, it is thy meer grace and mercy that it is not so? (which is the act of humiliation your letter saith you can hardly come unto) and why? not because Gods grace puts any lesse evill in sin, but because it is meerly grace that keeps it from spitting that venome which otherwise it would.

Secondly, a Christian may be considered in respect of his naturall being in himself, and thus he is ever under the Law, and as oft as he sinneth, under the sentence of death (and as the Apostle speaks) by nature even we (justified, quickned) are the children of wrath as well as others. And thus after the least involuntary accidentall sin, you may easily see what cause you have to lie down deeply humbled, mourning under the sentence of death, and Gods eternall curse, as a condemned man going to the execution, to feel that fire that shall never go out; looking upon your self as you are in your self, a forlorn cast-away every moment:

ment: & this truly understood is the foundation of a Christians sorrow, shame, and confusion of face, self-loathing, self-forgetting, self-forsaking, and condemning every day: and (believe it Sir) it is no small piece of a Christians skill and work, to put a difference between himself and himself, himself as he is in Christ, and so to joy and triumph, and himself as he is growing on his first root, and so to sorrow, and loath, and condemn himself: so that (to winde up all that I have said) look upon your self as in Christ, you may say, these involuntary infirmities do not, shall not, condemn me.

But Lord it is grace, Grace that it is not so, and this is Evangelicall humiliation. Look again upon your self, as you stand on your own bottom, and live in your own nature, and so you may say after the least infirmity; I have now broken a most holy and righteous Law, and therefore I am already condemned: O wo is me, I have already undone my self by mine iniquity: and this is legall humiliation, which serves for mortification, as the first for vivification. I know it is very difficult to bring the heart to acknowledge freely it deserves death after so small an involuntary offence: but when the Lord reveales two things, First, himself in his glory, Secondly, how the least sin strikes him: I perswade my self the vilest heart cannot but be forced to confesse how just God should be in his severest proceedings against him. And withall consider, the more involuntary any sin is, the more strong and naturall it is, and the more naturall, the more horrible, as to be a naturall Thief is farre worse than to be a deliberate Thief, who sometimes steals; and therefore (good Sir) take heed of looking no deeper, not seeing no further than the bare act, and unvoluntarinesse and accidentalnesse, and suddennesse of your infirmities: for if you do, you look through the wrong end of the glasse, and they will appear so small, that you will find it a very rough work to bring your heart consentively to say (if I may say and use your own phrase) It is a mercy Lord that I am not consumed for them: but look upon them as indeed they are, in respect of that infinite glory you strike, doing the greatest mischiefes to God by them, and (which makes them the viler) as they are so strong, you cannot remove them; and so horrible, as that it is unnaturall to you to commit them, &c. And surely you will not (through grace) find such thoughts haunt you long; not but

but that they will be (haply) rising and tempting, but never alway vexing and prevailing. Satans ground reaching as far as the minds of Gods people, and therefore so farre he may come, and there he may walk, (for he came into the mind of innocent *Adam*, nay *Jesus Christ*, by his suggesting temptations) but the heart is Christs peculiar possession and purchase; and if he shall still offer to come in and vex you, and prevail against you, and to lodge his suggestions this or any other way with you, you have Law and Christ on your side, by this little light now given you, to cast him out.

Answ.

Quest. 3 The third thing that troubles you, is the disranking of the Persons in the Trinity; for though you think the Holy Ghost is God, yet you have not so high a repute of him, as of the Father and the Son, because the Son addresseth himself to God the Father in all his prayers and acknowledgements, in a more immediate manner than unto the Holy Ghost, and therefore you would know if the word Father (as in the Lords Prayer) includes not the Unity in Trinity.

Answ. To this briefly consider three things.

1. Without all question, the same God which lies under that relative property of Father, is the same God with the God-head of the Son, and the God-head of the Holy Ghost, there being not three Gods; and therefore the God-head of the Son and Spirit, are not excluded, but included in the God-head of the Father, when we look upon the Father as God, in the Lords Prayer, or any where else.

2. But secondly, the Father as Father, is never taken for the same Holy Ghost in Scripture, nor the Son as Son, is taken for the Father, nor the Holy Ghost as Holy Ghost, is at any time taken for the Son: For it is a rule in Theologie, though the *res subsistens* the thing that lies under the Relative property (*viz.* the God-head) of every person, be common and communicated, yet the same God-head considered as clothed with his Relative property (as Father, Son, and Spirit) it is not common but peculiar. For the God-head of the Father as Father, is not the God-head of the Son as Son, &c.

3. Hence it follows, that when Christ addresseth himself to the Father as Father in Scripture, it is not because he is either a diverse or greater God than the Holy Ghost, but it is for two other reasons.

1. Because

1. Because the Father as Father, received primarily the wrong that sin did against his Work of Creation. For the Father being the first Person in order, and creation, the first transient act (as election and reprobation were the first immanent) hence this work is attributed chiefly to God the Father, in respect of our orderly apprehension; and hence man sinning then when he was only made, this is chiefly attributed to be against the Father, because his Work appeared to be chiefly there, and not against the Son, for his work chiefly appears in Redemption, he being the second Person, and this the second main and wonderfull work; neither against the Holy Ghost, for his work chiefly appears to us in Application, being the third Person, and this the third main act that ever God will do, or show forth to the world in this life: hence God the Father receiving to our apprehension, the wrong in creation by sin, he is the Person that is to be satisfied, and not the Holy Ghost. And hence Jesus Christ in all his prayers had a most speciall eye to him, and not to the Holy Ghost (as Holy Ghost) because he came into the world by his death, and intercession, and strong cryes, to satisfie God the Father, and not God the Holy Ghost as a third Person. And hence it is said, 1 *John* 2. 1, 2. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with God the Father*, (not God the Holy Ghost) because he was (to our apprehension) the Person wronged: and hence we are after sins committed chiefly to the eye the Father in our prayers, and to go to him for pardon with our Advocate with us, because to whom offence is chiefly offered, from him chiefly pardon and reconciliation is to be expected.

2. Therefore Christ addresseth himself chiefly in his prayers to God the Father, because he is the original and first cause of all good, because he is the first Person in order of subsisting, and therefore first too in the manner of conveying. I know the Godhead is the originall of all good: but consider the Persons one with another, and so the Father is ever the first in operation, as the Holy Ghost is the last in consummation, for all good comes from the Father, *James* 1. 17. through the Son, by the Holy Ghost. And hence in all our prayers we are to look for all good from the Father; for his Sonnes sake to be conveyed us by the Holy Ghost: and hence it is said, *John* 6. 10. *No man comes to me but whom the Father draws*: Why? It is the immediate

immediate office and work of the Holy Ghost to draw and apply the soul unto Christ, why then is it said, *Unlesse the Father draw?* The reason is, because that which was perfected and consummated by the Holy Ghost, was intentionally and by way of purpose and decree begun originally by the Father; and this is that which Christs words have chiefly reference unto (*viz.*) the Father through the Son by the Holy Ghost draws.

But I have waded too farre in this Divinity, the clear knowledge of which is reserved for us in heaven: But thus much to satisfie you; yet the word Father in the Lords Prayer, I conceive, under correction, as it doth not exclude any person of the God-head, so its chiefly set down there, not so much to denote the Person of the Father, as the affection of God as a Father to us his Sons by Christ, which we are to beleeve in our first approaching to our prayers, to be as, nay to transcend, the affection of any Father to his Son: when we come to call upon him for those six things which the Petitions set down, for those three ends, kingdome, power, and glory, which the Prayer concludes withall.

Quest. 4. Your fourth trouble is your apтnesse to go to God immediately, especially when his graces are most striving in his Ordinances, contrary to that of Christ, *Yee believe in God, beleeve also in me.*

Answ. So indeed it is usuall for religious nature often to outrun and get the start of grace; as it appears in many other, so in this case you put; Look as it is with every man when God awakens him effectually, he first seeks to his Kitchin-physick to save himself, by his duties, praying, mourning, reforming, endeavouring, repenting, working, before he will seek out to the Physician, and to Christ to save him. Because it was naturall to *Adam* to seek to live by his working, it is naturall to every Son and branch of that root, to seek to save himself by doing as well as he can, or as God gives him the strength and grace. So it is here. It was naturall to *Adam* to depend upon, and go to God immediately, as a creature to a Creator, as a Son to go nakedly to God as a Father; Christ was not then known, nor seen: so it is naturall to every man, when rectified Nature is stirred up, to go immediately to God. It is grace in the second Covenant that reveals and draws to Jesus Christ, and so God by Christ, *Heb.* 7. 25.

For

For cure of this distemper, ponder but these three things.

1. Clearly convince the soul, that the immortall, invisible, and most holy God, that dwelleth in an unapproachable light, hath set out himself to be seen, or made himself only visible, in Jesus Christ, so that he would have no man look upon him any other wayes, than as he hath revealed himself in his Son: In whom (though in all other creatures his *vestigia* and foot-steps are to be seen) as he is God, the face of God is to be seen, which no creature is able to behold, but there, being the brightnesse of his glory, and the expresse Image of his Person, *Heb.* 1. 3. And as he is man, the very heart of God, both in respect of affection, and will to be seen; So that in and through Jesus Christ, especially his humane nature, the glory of the great God breaks out like the Sun through the clouds most brightly, in respect of us, and therefore in and through his humane nature we are only to behold God, in whom all that a Christian desires to know, is to be seen, which is the face and heart of so dear a friend, 1 *Cor.* 4. 6. *John* 14. 9, 10. For we know by too lamentable experience, how the whole world vanishing in their smoaky thoughts of the glory of God, as he is considered in himself, and not able to conceive or retain the knowledge of him, did hence invent and set up Images as fit objects for there drunken staggering understanding to fasten upon, and to be limited with, and hence adored God before these, (as our Popish Hypocrites do before the Altar) and in these, and at these, as Papists do in respect of their Images. Hence the Lord to cure this inveterate naturall malady, hath in the second Person, united himself to man Christ Jesus, through whom we are both able to our everlasting wonderment to see him, and also here bound only to behold him, who as he is a fit handle for our faith, so he is a fit object for our weak minds to behold the glory of the most high God in. Wherefore then do you offer to go unto God without Christ, when as you are not so much as to look upon God; but as he appears in Christ? Is not the humane nature of the Lord Jesus more easie to be seen and conceived of, than the invisible unlimited eternal God-head?

2. Secondly, See evidently that there is not any dram or drop of God you have, especially in Gods Ordinances, but it issues from the blood, and is purchased by the intercession, and delivered unto you by the hand of Jesus

Christ, *Ephes.*1.7. *Heb.*7.25. *John* 5.22. You should never have heard the sound of the Gospel, nor never have had day of Patience, nor never have heard of Gods Ordinances to find him in, nor never have been comforted, quickned, enlarged, affected by Gods Ordinances, were it not for Jesus Christ, the efficacy of whose blood, and power of whose glorious intercession, doth at the very instant you feel any good in Gods Ordinances, prevail with God the Father for what you feel; for the Father loveth the Son, and *hath put all things into his hands*, *John* 4. 35. that all men might honour the Son; all the three Persons plotting chiefly for the honour of the second; so that you may see, nay you are bound to beleeve, at the time you feel your heart savingly affected in any Ordinance now, the Lord Jesus who is at the right hand of God in Heaven, who is now in his glory, now he remembring me a poor Worm on earth, now I feel the fruit of his death. O what a miserable forlorn wretch had I been, were it not for Jesus Christ? Mercy could never have helped, enlightened, comforted, quickened, assured, enlarged me, and Justice could never have relieved my dead, bloudy, perishing lost Soul, had it not been for Jesus Christ, whose Spirit, power, grace, comfort, presence, sweetness, I taste, drink, and am satisfied abundantly with, and now do enjoy.

Oh Sir, me thinks the sad meditation of this, should make you in all Gods Ordinances, where you are apt to say you go immediately to God, to hasten suddenly in your thoughts, affections, praises, to Jesus Christ. Nay, me thinks you should speedily have your heart elevated and lifted up to Jesus Christ, and say, I receive this, and taste this from Jesus Christ. Oh, but this is but a taste of the hony-comb with the end of my rod, and if this presence of Christs Spirit I feel now be so sweet, what is himself then?

3. Thirdly, Labour for increase of love and familiarity with Jesus Christ, by taking notice of him, by comming often to him, by musing dayly on his love, as on a fresh thing, by banishing slavish false fears of his forgetfulness of you, and want of everlasting love towards you: and then you know love will carry you speedily to him: *amor meus pondus meum*, nay, grant that you have been a stranger to Christ, yet restore the love of Christ to life again in your Soul, and when you come to his Ordinances where he

he dwells, your Soul will make its first enquiry for him, neither will it be satisfied till it hath seen him, as we do them we love, towards whom we have been greatest strangers.

Your fifth trouble is, you know not how to apply absolute promises to your self, as in *Heb.* 8. because they are made indefinitely without condition. Conditionall promises you say you can, if you can finde the qualification that gives you right to the good of the promise within you. *Quest.* 5.

This usefull fruitfull question, how to apply absolute promises to ones particular, deserves a larger time and answer, than now in the midst of perplexities, I am able, yet willing, to give. For when the Lord saith absolutely without condition, that he will take away the stony-heart, and he will put his fear into his peoples hearts, &c. and these kind of promises are made to some, not to all, to those only whom the Lord will, and in generall to his people, Hereupon the Souls of many Christians, especially such as question Gods love towards them, are most in suspence: and therefore when they complain of the vileness of their hearts, and strength of their lusts, let any man tell them that the Lord hath undertaken in the Second Covenant, to heal their back-slidings, and to subdue their iniquities, they will hereupon reply, it is true, he hath promised indeed to do thus for some absolutely, though they have no good in them, but I that feel so vile a heart, so rebellious a nature, will he do this for me, or no? and thus the Soul floats above water, yet fears it shall sink at last, notwithstanding all that God hath said. I will answer therefore briefly these two things in generall. *Answ.*

1. I shall shew you to what end, and for what use and purpose God hath made absolute promises, not only to them that be for the present his people, but to them that in respect of their estates and condition are not.

2. I shall shew you how every Christian is to make use of them, and how and when he ought to apply them. For the first of these.

1. First, I conceive, that as in respect of God himself, there are many ends which I shall not mention, as being needlesse, so in respect of man, there are principally these two ends for which the Lord hath made absolute promises.

1. To raise up the Soul of a helplesse, sinfull, cursed, lost sinner in his own eyes, to some hope (at least) of mercy

and help from the Lord. For thus usually every mans Soul is wrought, to whom the Lord doth intend grace and mercy: he first turns his eyes inward, and makes him to see he is stark naught, and that he hath not one dram of grace in him, who thought himself rich, and wanting nothing before, and consequently, that he is under the curse and wrath of God for the present, and that if the Lord should but stop his breath, and cover his face, and take him away, which he may easily do, and i to be feared he will, that he is undone for ever. Hereupon the Soul is awakned and falls to his Kitchin-physick, as I spake before, prayes, and hears, and amends, and strives to grow better, and to stop up every hole, and to amend it self of every sin, but finding it self to grow worse and worse, and perceiving thereby that he doth but stirre, and not cleanse the puddle, and that it is not amending of nature that he must attain to, but he must beleeve, and make a long arm to Heaven, and apprehend the Lord Jesus, (which so few know, or ever shall enjoy) and hereby quench the wrath of God; I say, finding he cannot do thus, no, nor no means of themselves can help him to this, hereupon he is forsaken of all his self wisdom, and of all his vain hopes, and now sits down like a desolate Widdow, comfortlesse, and sorrowfull, and thinks there is no way but death and hell, and the wrath of a displeased God to be expected. And i any come and tell this Soul of Gods mercy and pitty to sinners, I saith he, its true, he is even infinitely merciſull unto them who are rent for their sins, and that can beleeve, but that I cannot do, and am sure shall never be able for to do, and therefore what cause have I but to lie down in my sorrow, and to expect my fatall stroke every moment? Reply again upon this Soul, and tell him, that though he cannot beleeve, or loosen his heart from sin, yet that the Lord hath promised to do it, that he will subdue all his iniquitie, and he will pardon all his sin, and that he will cause men to walk in his wayes, &c. True, saith the Soul again, he will do thus for his own people, and for them he hath chosen, but I never had a dram of grace in my heart, and there is no evidence that the Lord is mine own, or that I am his: Here again the Soul lies down, untill the Lord discovers to the Soul that he will do these things for some that have no grace, or never had grace, for these promises were made to such.

Hereupon the Soul thinks thus; These promises are made

made for some that are filthy, for why should God poure clean water upon them? for some that be hard-hearted, for why should he promise to take away the stony-heart from them? &c. and if unto some such, and I being such a one, why may not the Lord possibly intend and include me, seeing he hath not by his promise excluded nor shut me out? Indeed I dare not say he will, but yet how do I, or men, or Angels know, but yet I may be one? Hereupon Hope is raised to life again; seeing God hath undertaken the work for the vilest, it is possible he may do it for me, now when I am vile and can do nothing for my self. And thus you may see the first end and use of absolute promises, to be as it were, twigges to uphold the sinking Spirits of hopelesse, helplesse, distressed Souls.

2. The second End and Use of them is this. To create and draw out faith in Jesus Christ in the promises. For as the Law begets terror, so the promises beget Faith. Now no conditionall promise firstly begets Faith, because he that is under any condition of the Gospel, in that man there is a pre-supposed faith. Its Gods absolute promise that firstly begets faith, for faith is not assurance, but the comming of the whole Soul to Christ in a promise, *John* 6.35. And then the Soul beleeves in Christ, when it comes to Christ, now this God works in the Gospel. First the Soul is raised up by hope. And being raised, it Secondly comes to Christ, which is faith, by vehement unutterable desire. And being come to him, it Thirdly embraceth Christ by love, and thus the match is made, and the everlasting knot is tied.

Now as you have heard, the absolute promise works hope of relief from Christ: and if it works hope, it also works a desire, or comming to Christ by desire. Oh! that thou Lord wouldst honour thy grace, thy power, thy love, thy promise, in helping me a poor cast-away. And thus faith is created (as it were) by this absolute promise: for it cannot but move the heart of any one that ever felt his want, to cry mightily to the Lord for help, if he hath any hope, seeing the Lord hath promised to do it for some. Oh saith the Soul, that thou wouldst do it for me: And surely, were it not for this absolute promise of God, no Soul would desire, because he would have no hope to be saved, or to seek for any thing as from the hands of God. And thus you see to what end God makes, and to what use a Christian may put these absolute promises.

How to apply absolute promises.

2. For the second thing (*viz*) How and when a Christian may apply these promises.

I answer, every Christian is either,

1. Within Covenant with God, and knows it, or
2. Within Covenant with God, and knows it not, or
3. Out of Covenant indeed, for his present estate and condition, yet he is *in fieri*, or making towards it.

1. If he be in Covenant and knows it, then you may easily perceive how and when he ought to apply promises unto himself, for he may boldly conclude, If God be his God, then all the promises of God shall be made good unto him; if he be a Son of God, he may boldly challenge at all times at the hands of God, (nay in some respects, at the hands of Justice it self) the fulfilling of God the Fathers will delivered in the severall Legacies of the promise bought by the blood, & sealed by the same blood of Jesus Christ, that they may and shall be made good unto him, that is clear.

2. Secondly, If he be in Covenant, and knows it not, and questions hence whether God is his or not, and consequently, whether the promises belong unto him: then the rule is to be observed, let him sue and seek for the good of the absolute promise, untill by reflecting upon his own acts, herein he perceive himself adorned & dignified with the qualification of some conditional promise, and then if he can find the condition or qualification within himself, then as you judg and write, he may conclude, that the conditionall promise belongs to him, and if one promise, then all Gods promises, and therefore that absolute promises are his own, because at least one conditional promise is. For no unregenerate man is within the compass of any one conditional promise of grace, unless you will say he is under the everlasting love of God, the promises of grace being but the mid-way between the eternal purpose and decree of love, & the glorious certain execution of that love in time. The promise being the break day of Gods most glorious love, which must shine out in time.

Object. But here you will say is the difficulty, *viz*. how I should so seek for the good of absolute promises, as therein to find my self within the compass of some conditional one.

I answer, It is done chiefly by three acts.

1. By being humbly contented, that seeing the Lord hath absolutely promised to work and do all for the Soul he intends for to save, even when it can do nothing for it self, and that he hath taken the work into his own hands;

so

so that it is his promise, offer, office, and honour to do all: that therefore you lie down, not slug gishly, but humbly at the feet of God, & contented to have him to be your God, and for ever to be disposed of in any thing by God, if he wil fulfil his Covenant in you, contented to part with any sin, if he will rend it from you, contented to know any truth if he will reveal it to you, contented to do any duty, if he will enable you, contented to shine bright with all his glorious graces, if he will create and maintain them in you, contented to bear any evil, if he may lay his hand under your head, and thereunto strengthen you; and so seeing the Lord promised to undertake the work for some, put out the work, & put over your Soul to him, that he would fulfill the good that his Covenant promiseth in your self. Now when you do thus, which (no question) you and many a soul doth, many times reflect upon this act, and see if you cannot or may not find your self by it under the condition of some conditional promise, and if you do, then are you bound to believe all Gods promises are and will be *Yea* and *Amen* unto you. Now that you do so by this act, it self speaks plainly, for how many conditionall promises are made to the meek? *Blessed are the meek*, *Mat.* 5. and to the humble? whom God will raise up. For this is not saving-meekness, to be quietly contented to be, or to do, or to bear any thing that the Lord will have me from mine own strength and feeling, but to be, to do, or to bear any thing that the Lord will have me, if the Lord enable me. Many a stout heart would gladly have Christ, but if he cannot have him in his own termes, *viz.* Christ and his lusts, Christ and the world too, or by his own strength and power, he will have none of him, but desperately casts him away, and saith, what shall I look after him any more? I cannot pray, I cannot believe, I cannot break this vile and unruly will, this stony adamant heart, thus the pride of a mans heart works. Now he that is truly meekned and humbled, he is contented gladly to have God his God, and Christ his Redeemer, and that upon Jesus Christ his own termes. First, on his own Covenant; now what is that? why it is this, I will give you the good, and work in you the condition too, I will give you my self, and therfore will not stick to give you an eye to see, and a heart to receive too. This is the Covenant; now hereupon a humbled Soul accepts of Christ according to his Covenant, on his own termes thus, *viz.* upon that condition Lord, that thou wilt humble me, teach me, perswade me, cause me to

believe, and in every thing to honour thee; Lord, I am contented gladly and joyfully to have thee, do therefore what thou wilt with me. Just as a sick man tells his Physician, who comes not to him on these termes, If you will make your self half whole, then I will cure you, and do the rest for you; but being utterly unable to cure, or to know how to cure himself, he tells his Physician, I am content you should begin and perfect the cure, and so honour your skill and love in me, to be contented to take any thing if you will give it me, and if I offer to resist that, you should bind me, and so do any thing with me.

2. The second act is, earnestly to long and come to Christ, to cleave unto Jesus Christ by frevent and ardent desire, that he would make good those absolute promises to you, seeing that they are made to some, and that they do not exclude you; for when you ponder well, and see what wonderful great things the Lord promiseth to some, whose heart cannot but be stirred up to say, as that woman in another case, *Lord, give me of that water to drink*; and as they in the 6th of John, *Lord, evermore give us that bread*. Now doing this, reflect upon the second act, and see if unto it, no conditional promise belongs, and you shall find an affirmative answer from the word. For what is this longing after the good, not of some (which many hypocrites do) but of all the promises, but that which the Scripture calls thirsting? who are commanded to *come and drink of the waters of life freely*, Isa. 55. 1, 2. and hungring? to which all good things are promised, *Mat.* 5. 6. and which comming to Christ (as I spake even now) who hath given this as the first fruit of eternall election, and which kind of people he will never cast away, *John* 6. 37. Now when you see these promises belonging unto you, why dare you not conclude but that all these absolute ones are yours also?

3. The third act is this, Seeing God hath promised absolutely such good things in the Second Covenant, but hath not set down the time when, or how much grace he will give; and seeing only he can help, therefore look up, and wait upon the Lord in the use of all known means, untill he makes good what he hath promised to do, and perform, and work for you. Say as beggars that have but one door to go to for bread, if none hear, or hearing help not, lay themselves down at the door, and say, I will wait here, I am sure I perish if I go away, or quarrell with them in the house, because they help me not so soon as I would, and

there-

therefore I will wait, for it may be their compassions may move them as they passe by to help me. So do you, Many a Soul comes and longs for the good of the promises, but if the Lord do not speedily help him, he goes with discouragements, fears, and discontents, or despair, or sin, away, and saith one of these two things, either I shall never have help, or I come not truly, and hence I feel no help. Oh remember that bread is only to be had at the door, to be distributed when the Lord seeth need, nor when we would, or think we have need; and therefore wait here and say, if I perish, here I will, at the feet of God, and at the feet of the promises and covenant of God, &c.

Now reflect upon this act, and see if you may not finde some conditionall promise annexed unto it, which surely you may, and I will name you but two, *Isa.* 49. 29,30,31. and *Isa.* 64. 4. and if the conditionall promise belongs to such a Soul, you may easily conclude the absolute promises are your own, & the chiefest use you are to make of them when you know them that they are your own, is to presse God to make them good daily to you; & to believe as verily & really, as if you had the performance of them, that they shall: It may be you will ask me, how shall I know whether I have these conditions truly in me? I answer, sincerity is a very witnessing grace, the frequent meditation of the Scripture will give you much light, to judge of the sincerity of them, and that which Saint *Paul* speaks, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. I say unto you, *We have not received the spirit of the world, but of God, whereby we know,* (or may know) *the things that are freely given to us of God.*

3. Thirdly, if he be out of the Covenant, but yet God begins to work with some common work of his grace upon him: all that I would say unto him, and all the use he can make of such absolute promises, consists in these things.

1. Let him consider the freenesse of Gods promise, whereby he may be stirred up to conceive some hope it may be made good to him in time. For the promise is very free and large, excluding none (except those that sin unpardonably) be their sins and natures never so vile before God, and yet not including any by name, for that is in the conditionall promise: and hence such an one is to make this use of it, who knows but the Lord may have pitty upon me in time? and so hang thy hope upon him.

2. Let

2. Let him conſider the worth and price of Gods promiſe bought by blood, and for which ſome men would give a thouſand worlds for the benefit and comfort of, and hereby raiſe up his heart, as by the freeneſs of it to hope, ſo by the price of it to eſteem of the thing promiſed, above pearls, and all the honour and pomp of the world.

3. Let him conſider the fulneſs of the promiſe, which is a plaiſter as big as his ſore, juſt anſwerable to all his wants, nay infinitely more large than his wants. And ſurely theſe three things will draw his heart to long for the promiſe, and then you know what is conditionally promiſed and bequeathed to them that thirſt: For ſimilitude is the ground of love. Now when the fulneſſe of the promiſe is ſeen, there will appear ſuch a ſuitablneſſe and fitneſſe of the promiſe to his ſoul, that he cannot but long for it. Thus much for the fifth trouble.

Queſt. 6. Your ſixth trouble ſet down in two heads, put into one for brevity, *viz.* ſecret unwillingneſs to ſeek God in the ſtricteſt ſolemn ſervices, before you enter into them; wearineſs of them while they laſt, and glad when they are gone: the reaſons which you mention are, partly fear of not uſing them aright, together with melancholy, and laſtly, the ſtrictneſs of them.

Anſw. It is very true, there is abundance of wildneſs in our hearts, which naturally ſeek to have their liberty abroad, & cannot endure to be pent in the narrow room of holy performances, extraordinary duties, &c. no more than children can be pent up from their play. And hence it is weary of them, and glad to think of their departures and ends. And truly it is one of the moſt grievous miſeries that a holy heart can feel, and I beſeech the Lord of heaven and earth to keep you, and me, and all his for ever, while we are here in our valley, under the ſenſe of ſuch diſtempers, as our greateſt miſery. And therefore me thought it was a ſolemn ſweet ſpeech of an honeſt man to his friend, who ſeeing him oppreſſed with ſuch diſempers as you mention, and perceiving him to droop under them, he came chearfully to him, and ſuddenly ſaid unto him, *I can tell you good news, the beſt that ever you heard, viz. Aſſoon as ever you are in Heaven, you ſhall ſerve Chriſt without wearineſs*: Which words well thought on, revived the man. That which I would ſpeak with as much tenderneſſe of compaſſion as I am able to you, I referre to theſe things.

1. That a child of God is never uſually weary of the duty, but rather of his vile heart, to think of, and to look upon,

upon, that in the duty *Chriſts yoke is eaſie, and his burthen light*, to him that takes it on his neck, and puts his Soul under it. The duty nakedly conſidered in it ſelf, is glorious in his eyes, and ſweet to his Soul, and hence ſometimes never well, but when he conſiders his dead, blinde, barren, and ſenſeleſs heart that he is to carry to the duty, and that he fears, and hath felt will abide with him in the duty: O this grieves, here the Soul pincheth. An Hypocrite is weary of the duty a child of God rejoyceth in it, but he is weary of his ſin, and unſavourineſs and wearineſs in the duty. I perſwade my ſelf, Sir, that you may ſoon miſtake your ſpirit herein: you think you are unwilling to come to the duty, and are weary of it, when indeed, it is your glory, joy, and love; but it is becauſe you fear you can do it no better, that troubles you, that you have ſuch a vile heart in it. And if your trouble be from hence, the good Lord increaſe it in you dayly; and withall, bleſſe the Lord and ſay, Lord, though I am weary of my vile heart, in theſe dayes of humiliation, in theſe Sabbaths, yet I bleſſe thee, the daies and duties themſelves thou knoweſt are dear unto me, It is not Lord becauſe I am weary of thy Word, but becauſe I can do it no better, I am weary of my ſelf, and this vile heart; here is much love in ſuch a ſpirit to the Lord. And believe it Sir, your love wants not its recompences, and remember, that the Lord reſpects you not according to your duties done, but according to your love in them, and to them. And therefore thoſe duties you are aſhamed to own, the Lord will not be aſhamed to crown.

2. Conſider, you muſt and ſhall be baited with theſe diſtempers of heart, ſometimes more, and ſometimes leſs, as long as you live. It is part of *Pauls* body of death which he muſt carry with him, till he come to bury himſelf.

3. Thoſe means which may help you to be freed from them (a little at leaſt) are theſe among many.

1. Be but truly and really, not by fits and darkly, ſenſible of them; men in deep miſeries, are not unwilling to be helped out.

2. Judge ye not rigorouſly of God, as though he were a bloody auſtere God, as he did of his maſter whoſe talent he had, and hence never improved it; but look upon God as having a Fathers heart and affection towards you in the meaneſt and greateſt performances; which is double, either to give you ſtrength to do what you cannot (*I can do all things through Chriſt*) or having come to him for it, to accept

cept of what you would do for him, as if it were done; and this will make you joy in the pooreſt performance that though it be never ſo full of vileneſs, yet the Lord out of his fatherly love, accepts of it as glorious.

3. Renew morning and evening by ſad and ſolemn meditation, the ſenſe of Gods love to you in Chriſt, and in every duty that he ſets you about, and love will love and like the yoke, and make the commandments that they ſhall not be grievous to you.

Thus I have briefly done with your new troubles which you mention, you ſay, becauſe you may not have the like opportunity of writing again. It may be ſo, and therefore I have deſired to ſatisfie you, which I beſeech the Lord himſelf to do.

Next you come to reply to my firſt Letter, of which I have kept no copy, as I never did of any, and hence may and do forget what I writ then unto you. So much light as your Letter lends me to bring things to mind, I will gladly take, and be more brief in anſwer.

Queſt. 1. You finde the ſtrength of grace to be got in you rather by argumentation, than inward communication and influence ariſing from the union to Chriſt. And this troubles you.

To which I anſwer theſe three things.

Anſw. 1. That as the old ſinful nature is communicated from *Adam* the firſt to us, without any argumentation: ſo the new nature, which is the ſeed, foundation, and plot of all grace, is diffuſed into us by the ſecond *Adam* when we are united to him, without argumentation. It is only by divine operation. The Lord leave not me, nor any friend I have, to a naked Arminian illumination and perſwaſion.

2. That to the increaſe of thoſe habits, and drawing out the acts of the new creature, the Lord is pleaſed to uſe morall and rationall perſwaſions, as in the inſtance you gave, Chriſt died for us, then hence the love of Chriſt conſtraines: but remember withall, It is not the bare meditation, or ſtrength of reaſon or perſwaſion, that elicits ſuch divine and noble acts in the heart and affection, but it is the blood of Chriſt ſprinkling theſe ſerious meditations, that makes them work ſuch graces in the Soul; which I might ſhew at large: which blood is the ſalve, though argmentation is the cloath or leather to which it ſticks, and by which it is applyed; but from ſuch leather comes no vertue, all of it is from the blood of Chriſt, which by argu-

mentation

mentation heals the Soul. For if it were nakedly in the argumentation to ſtir your heart, and to work ſtrength of grace, what ſhould be the reaſon that ſome times you are no more moved by all your argumentations, than a mountain of braſſe is by the windes? why ſhould the ſame truth affect you at one time, and not at another, when you are as fitly diſpoſed to be affected as at the firſt? Therefore conſider, it is not your reaſon and argumentation, but Chriſts blood that doth all, by as admirable, and yet ſecret operation.

3. Your union to Chriſt on your part is begun, and partly wrought by the underſtanding, and hence the good that you get by it at any time, it is from your union, or part of it at leaſt.

Again you aſk me, whether *Calvin* doth not expreſſe fully my thoughts about our Spirituall union, in his *lib.* 4. *cap.* 17. *Queſt.* 2.

I anſwer, I have forgot what he hath writ, and my ſelf have read long ſince out of him, and for the preſent I have no Books about me where I am, and therefore cannot ſatisfie you in this, neither know I when I ſhall ſeek to finde out the Book and place; if I have leiſure, I will write to you, or tell ſome of your friends before I am gone, what he hath ſaid or writ that way, &c. *Anſw.*

Again thirdly, You deſire me to tell you how my ſelf came to the cure of Atheiſtical thoughts, and whether they did wear out, or whether they were rationally overthrown. *Queſt.* 3.

I anſwer, at firſt they did wear out, meeting with fruitleſſe and dead-hearted company, which was at the Univerſity. *Anſw.*

2. The Lord awakened me again, and bid me beware leſt an old ſore broke out again: and this I found, that ſtrength of reaſon would commonly convince my underſtanding that there was a God, but I felt it utterly inſufficient to perſwade my will of it unleſſe it was by fits, when as I thought Gods Spirit moved upon the Chaos of thoſe horrible thoughts; and this I think will be found a truth.

3. I did groan under the bondage of thoſe unbelieving thoughts, looking up, and ſighing to the Lord, that if he were as his works and word declared him to be, he would be pleaſed to reveal himſelf by his own beams, and perſwade my heart by his own Spirit of his Eſſence and being,

being, which if he would do, I should account it the greatest mercy that ever he shewed me. And after grievous and heavy perplexities, when I was by them almost forced to make an end of my self and sinfull life, and to be mine own Executioner, the Lord came between the bridge and the water, and set me out of anguish of spirit, (as she prayed for a child) to pray unto him for light in the midst of so great darkness: In which time he revealed himself, manifested his love, stilled all those raging thoughts, gave return in great measure of them; so that though I could not read the Scripture without blasphemous thoughts before, now I saw a glory, a majesty, a mystery, a depth in it, which fully perswaded, and which light (I desire to speak it to the glory of his free grace, seeing you cal me to it) is not wholly put out, but remains while I desire to walk closely with him, unto this day. And thus the Lord opened mine eyes, and cured me of this misery; and if any such base thoughts come (like beggers to my door) to my minde, and put these scruples to me, I use to send them away with this answer, Why shall I question that Truth, which I have both known and seen?

Object. But you say this remedy is good, *viz.* of prayer, but that you cannot use it, especially because you question the Truth of God.

Answ. Yet (dear Sir) give not over this Trade, you will doubtlesse finde it gainfull, when it may be God hath laden you more with these thoughts, and made you loath your self for them. But the thing seems strange to me, if I mistake you not, *viz.* that your heart will not be perswaded, but that you must resolve your doubts concerning the perfection of Scripture, not by seeking to harmonize those passages that seem to crosse one another, but by ascribing some humanity or error, (if I may interpret you) to the Pen-men, seeing St. *Paul* saith, *We propheſie but in part*, and seeing one of the Evangelists leaves out the doxology in the Lords Prayer.

Sir, if you take these thoughts, arising from these and the like grounds, as your burden, I do not blame you, but pitty you in that respect; but if your judgement indeed think so, I am sorry you should harbour such thoughts one hour within doors: for you know that holy men writ the Scriptures (but so far they might erre, but it is added) as they were inspired, or (as the Originall hath it) as they were moved or carried in the arms of the Holy Ghost, and

6

so how could they erre? how could God lie? It is true, *Paul* did propheſie but in part, and is this an argument, becauſe he did not propheſie fully, therefore in ſome things he did not propheſie truly? I am perſwaded you will ſay there are many things my poor thoughts have ſuggeſted to you, as true; and yet I am perſwaded I do in them propheſie (if I may ſo ſay) but in part. The Spirit of God directed the four Evangeliſts to write, yet ſo, as they did not all write what another writ, but in great wiſdom left ſome things doubtfull, and ſhort in one, which are more clear and full in another: and hence the Doxology is fully ſet down in one, and not in another, and many reaſons I could ſet you down why, but that it is needleſſe: I grant you ought not to put up all with a charitable opinion of Scripture, but if you can, by reaſon, reading, and comparing, help your heart to a full perſwaſion, this is Scripture: but many things you cannot get ſatisfaction for, by that way and means, but ſtill your Spirit will be left dark and doubtfull; What courſe will you here take for reſolution, which is Scripture? The Papiſts ſay it is ſo, becauſe the Church hath chriſtned it for Scripture; you ſay you will ſee reaſon for it that it is ſo, or elſe you cannot be ſatisfied, then I fear you will never be ſatisfied, I think, in this caſe therfore theſe two things you are to do.

1. To go to God by prayer, to give you a reſolution of all your doubts, and by ſome means or other, ſome light to ſee whether this is his word or not. Secondly, if this be his word, that he would perſwade your heart of it, that it is ſo: For the leaſt reſolution which is Scripture, and which is not, is made by the ſame perſwaſion, and ſole perſwaſion of the ſame Spirit that writ the Scripture. Concerning the Angels that appeared to *Mary*, ſee *Gerard*, and he briefly, (I think) will ſatisfie you; In your anſwer to the particular ſcruples about the Scripture ſenſe, and the diſſonancy of them. Onely this I will adde to the laſt clauſe about theſe things, that if the Scripture be inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, and that not in the ſum and ſubſtance of it, but to every word and ſentence of it, which I think you will not doubt of, when you have conſidered it, then I think it will undeniably follow, that the ſame Spirit of Truth is alſo a Spirit of Order, and hence the method of various penning of it, is from the Spirit too, which you ſay you ſtick at.

Again, to your third thing, concerning your ſpirit being bur- *Anſw.* 2

burthened with involuntary infirmities, as burthens, but not as sins. I say nothing now, because I perceive by one part of your reply, that the Lord hath done you some good by the first answer, only it is your grief you cannot fear them, nor condemn your self for them, as damning sins. For satisfaction of which, I hope this reply to your second trouble will give you some satisfaction.

Quest. 4. Again, to your fourth question, to know whether these changes you have sometimes, and these movings of the Spirit, are not of naturall temper, or Gods Spirit. It seems I did a little mistake the meaning, because you meant not the main work of grace, but occasionall stirrings and movings of the heart, as by reading some patheticall Letter, your Spirit is moved with joy or sorrow, which it may be will not be stirred at some other time, as by drinking a cup of wine, the spirit is made more chearful & lively, &c.

I answer these three things.

Answ. 1. First, That it is very usefull for naturall affections to be raised by a naturall temper, as by drinking, eating, novelties of the Gospel, *John*'s candle flies were ravished with the Gospel: people are naturally moved sometimes by a thundering Minister, yet never a whit the more grace, &c. and it is a good speech of Doctor *Ames*: Arminian universall grace (as they describe it) may be the effect of a good dinner sometimes.

2. That though the being of grace depends not upon the temper of the body, yet the exercise of grace, and many gifts of grace, together with the feeling of it, doth. And hence a good dinner, and sometimes wine to a sad melancholy (if gracious) heart may remove *rem prohibentem*, that may keep grace, as joy and thankfulnesse, from working, and so take the grace and draw it out, not create and diffuse the grace: The Prophet called (you know) for a Minstril, which some think, (and that upon good grounds) was to raise up his heavy heart, and make him chearfull and fit to speak: the body is the instrument, which if it be broken, the best grace will hardly sound, but if whole, then they will.

3. If you would know when these things only draw out grace, or make a thing like unto grace in the Soul, I answer, by these two things chiefly

1. If it be true grace, it ever makes you more humble and vile in your own eyes, and say, Lord, why dost thou give me any desire to thee, any cheerfulnesse in serving thee? &c.

2. It

2. It makes you more thankfull, and to bleſſe the Lord that he thus remembers you; for this is a ſtanding rule, what ever comes from nature, and a mans ſelf, it ever builds up it ſelf, and returns to ſelf again; what ever grace comes from Chriſt, it drives a man out of himſelf, by making him humble, & draws him unto Chriſt that ſent him, by making him thankful; I think all grace, and ſtirrings, and movings, that have not this double effect in ſome meaſure, are to be ſuſpected, and if they have, it is dangerous to doubt whether they are true or no.

5. Again, your fifth thing about providence, you ſay you cannot ſee a poſitive providence, although you do ſee a negative providence in all your occaſions, and comforts, and croſſes, you meet withall, as namely, you can thank God for not taking away your life, &c. but you cannot ſee God giving it. *Queſt.* 5.

I anſwer, 1. Conſider what I writ to you at firſt, about this queſtion in generall. *Anſw.* 1.

2. Ponder ſadly whether any creature or appurtenance to it, hath its being from it ſelf, or from the Will and Word of God, *viz.* I will have ſuch a man to be, and ſuch a memory to be, &c. I think you will ſay nothing can make it ſelf, therefore here is a poſitive providence in having life, liberty, &c.

3. Conſider whether the ſame will and word that gives it a being, together with all the appurtenances to it, doth not alſo give it act and motion. That it is ſo, I thus demonſtrate it. 1. Every creature is made for an end, for no wiſe efficient, but works for ſome wiſe end. 2. That no creature can lead it ſelf to its end, if ſinful or irrationall. 3. God muſt and doth lead it by its ſeverall acts & movings to that end. Hence, 4. Every act is determined by God.

And although I grant ſome creatures move freely, ſome neceſſarily, yet it is from a poſitive will and providence that they move, act, and ſee: Therefore you ſee what cauſe there is to ſee a poſitive providence in every thing.

Concerning the reſt of your Letter, Oh that I had time and heart to write more, yet I hope I have writ enough for this time, and the Lord knows whether ever more or no. However, I thank you heartily for improving me this way of writing, who have my mouth ſtopt from ſpeaking. I wiſh I had more ſuch friends to deal thus with me, and my ſelf more time, and a more fruitfull head and heart to improve my ſelf, this, or any other like

way for them: For who knows what breathings of Gods Spirit are lost for want of writing, especially when there is no season of speaking? Truly sir, I meet with few that are much troubled in that manner as your self, but they go on in an easie, quiet, and very dangerous way: which troubles (I perswade my self) keep you awaking, when other virgins are slumbring, and after which (I am perswaded) the Lord intends to use you for more than common service, if you wade well through them; however, as I said before, be not discouraged, or too much perplexed in sorrow for them. For surely, as farre as I can guesse, the Lord is preparing you for himself by them. I shall not forget you, though I never saw you: and I beseech you if you have any spark of affection toward me, kindled by these few lines, remember when you are best able to pray for your self, to remember to look after me and mine, and all that go with me on the mighty waters, and then to look up and sigh to Heaven for me, that the Lord would out of his free grace but bring me to that good Land, and those glorious Ordinances, and that there I may but behold the face of the Lord in his Temple, though he never delight to use me there, though I and mine should possibly beg there, and that if the Lord should call me to my solemn work and service for the good of his Church and People, and company that go with me, or are gone before me, that then the Lord Jesus would reveal his secrets to me, and enable me the little time I have to live, to be frui full to him, and to have a larger heart than ever for him. As for your self, I shall desire the Lord to keep you blamelesse and unsported in an evill world, and that as he hath begun, so he would perfect, and crown his divine graces and work in you, and that you may be preserved from nationall sins, which shortly bring National and most heavy plagues.

And the presence of the Lord may abide with you, and in you, untill the Lord call for you. Remember my kind love to your Father, whose name I have forgot, and by whom I could not send these lines, being then hindred by businesse. Now the peace of Jesus Christ be with you, and keep you upright and blamelesse till death. And if I never see you more till the last and great day, then Farewell, Farewell,

Yours in Jesus Christ

T. S.